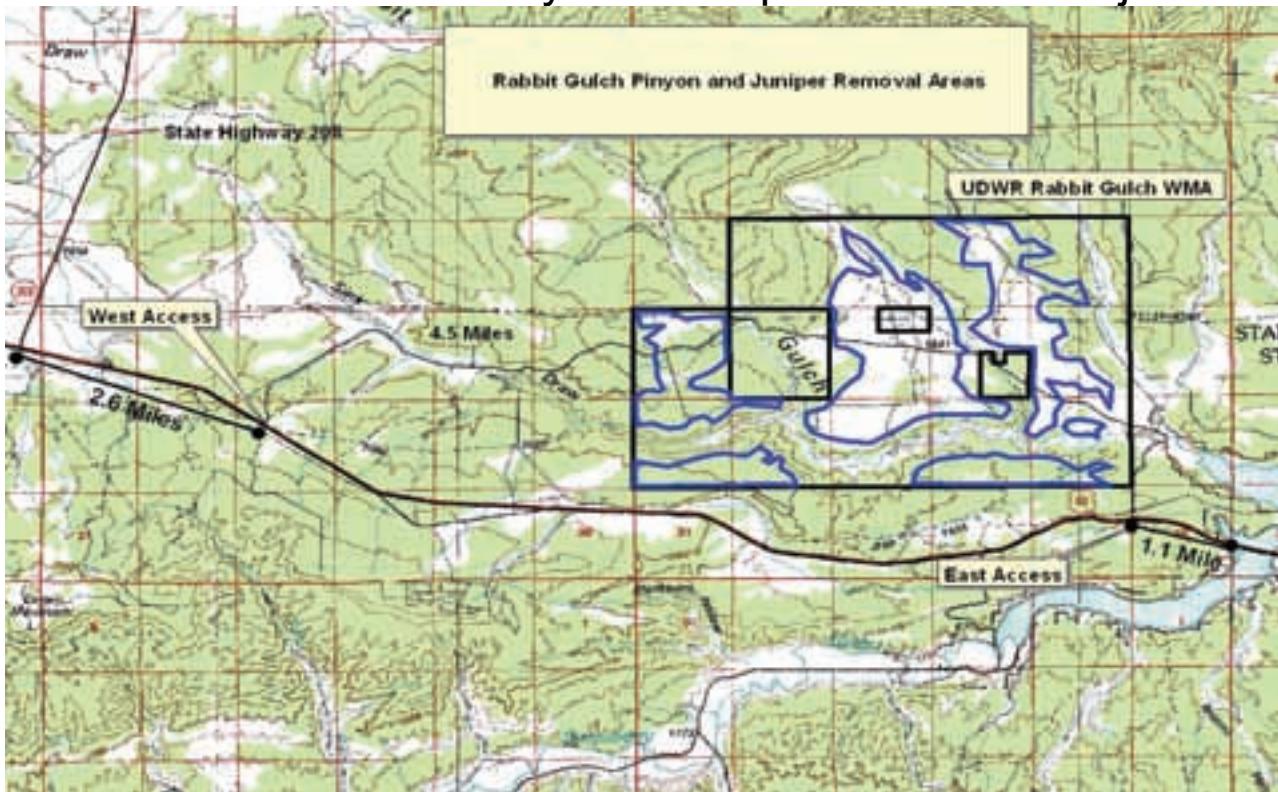


New Cutting Area for 2006

Rabbit Gulch Pinyon – Juniper Removal Project

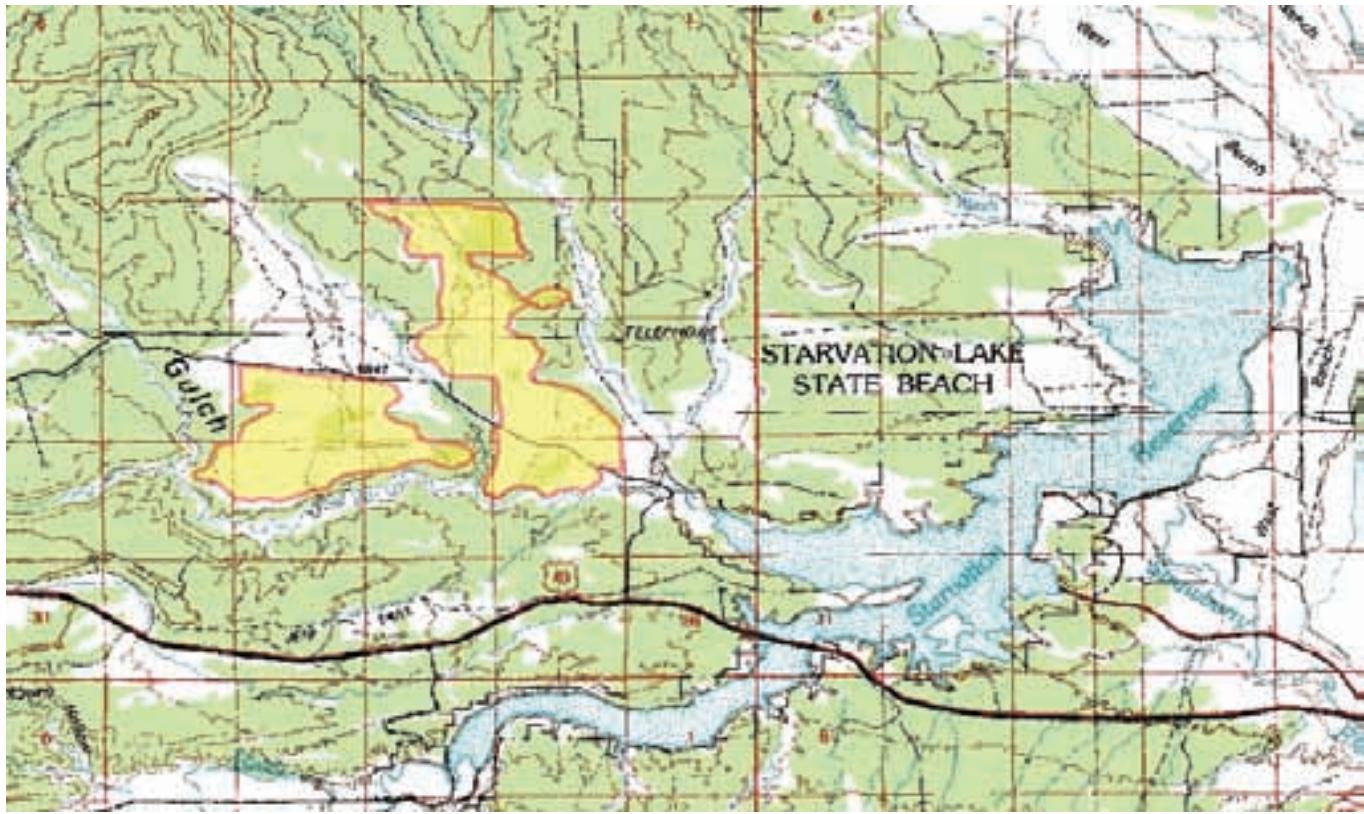


Thanks for your interest in the Pinyon-Juniper Removal Project. Dedicated Hunters have saved the Division thousands of dollars on this project already. The project is designed to enhance deer and elk winter range by removing young pinyon and juniper trees (P/J) that are encroaching on previously chained areas. The biologists have asked Dedicated Hunters to target the old chaining areas in the east side of Rabbit Gulch area for 2006 (map on page two).

The original chainings were designed to promote shrub, forb and grass growth to improve watershed conditions and provide winter forage for deer and elk. Throughout most of these chained areas, P/J trees are rapidly invading. As the trees grow larger and more abundant, they consume more water and nutrients making them unavailable for shrubs and understory plants such as grasses and forbs. Within another 30 to 50 years, this valuable deer winter range will become a mature P/J forest, which will contain little or no understory vegetation. In short: little forage = few mule deer or elk.

To protect the forage on these deer and elk winter ranges we have a few options: burning, chemical treatment, chaining, and physical (tree by tree) removal. Prescribed burns and chemicals kill trees but also kill the shrubs so we lose forage values. Chaining protects more shrubs but would give only marginal results. The younger trees are flexible and bend under the chain, thus only a few older trees would actually be uprooted. Also, these three treatments can be politically sensitive and are expensive. With tight budgets, physical removal seems to be the best option currently available. Dedicated hunters and other volunteers have played a major role in the rehabilitation of this chaining. Not only have they removed thousands of pinyon and juniper trees, the money saved by not chaining or paying a contractor to do the work has allowed the Division to take on new projects. A couple of these are a few miles west

of Rabbit Gulch on both sides of Highway 208 where the DWR has chained old sagebrush and P/J.



Rabbit Gulch:

The 2006 removal area, marked in yellow, is most easily accessed from the East Side.

The east access road is west of the Starvation Bridge and marked with a street sign "2800 West," turn north. There was a sign advertising "Great Basin Estates" just in from the turnoff at the time of this writing. Travel north on a paved road for 1.2 miles when the pavement ends turn on the road to your left (west). Follow this road about .3 miles to the Wildlife Management Area (WMA) sign, the old chaining starts at about .5 miles inside the WMA. From here, either take the next road north or continue on the main road for about 1.9 miles to a road going south. This south road forms a U shape with another about a mile ahead.

Look for evidence of chained areas, groups of old p/j skeletons lying on the ground, and cut the green p/j that is invading the chained area. These trees are usually 12-18 feet tall and not as heavily filled out as the older trees



Southern chaining (cutting area) from main road looking southwest. Note there is a house in the right foreground. Please respect their private property and don't cut near this residence.

that were not chained initially.

Rules, Regulations and Helpful Hints:

Suggestions:

- 1) Map - the USGS Duchesne 1:100,000 map is useful to reach the site and shows the entire area.
- 2) Vehicles are restricted to the main existing roads. Please park along the road itself, do not drive off or follow the small two tracks. This area is a critical winter range and the fewer roads the better.
- 3) Cut only the pinyon and juniper. Other trees and bushes are much more scarce and have more values for wildlife. Cut all pinyon and juniper in the chained areas including the extremely small ones. A **chainsaw is recommended for the larger trees** and an axe, Pulaski (ax/flat pick combo) or shovel may make removing the smaller trees easier.
- 4) Cut trees off at ground level. If any branches or anything green is left on the stump the tree will continue to grow and eventually one or more branches will become a main trunk.
Note: Tree shears may help with cutting the remaining branches. It's also easier to work in pairs, one person cutting while the other works as the spotter, helping to hold branches etc. Another trick is to cut the tree off at knee or waist high, pull it out of the way, and then recut at ground level.
- 4) Leave the trees where they fall. These fallen trees will help a) prevent erosion, b) catch moisture by trapping blowing snow and c) provide valuable microhabitats for small animals and plants.
- 5) Take as many safety precautions as you can while cutting such as using quality eye wear, gloves, heavy boots, etc. Also don't go solo; take along someone who can be there in case of an emergency.
- 6) Pack it in, pack it out. Please take your litter home and leave the area as clean or cleaner than you found it.
- 7) Tell someone where you are going and when you will return, and then stick to your plan. If you have a cell phone, bring it. Every year search and rescue has to look for someone, increase your chance of being found by giving them a correct place to look.
- 8) There are no organized campgrounds or camping areas in Rabbit Gulch. Our recommendation would be to stay at Starvation Reservoir, which has a State Park with a camping area, boat ramp and water. It also has some excellent walleye, bass and trout fishing.
- 9.) Take along extra water, food, gas, spare tires, etc. Rabbit Gulch is not too far from civilization but it is always good to go prepared for emergencies.

To Receive Dedicated Hunter Credit:

- 1) Prior to going in the field, pick up a timesheet/volunteer agreement at one of the Division offices, fill in Name and Job Description (Rabbit Gulch PJ removal project) and have a Division employee sign them. (The employee's signature only activates the insurance policy; it does not make them the project leader. You are your own project leader.) One individual may pick up agreements for everyone who will be involved (including kids over 12). Timesheets are good for two weeks. Note: You may go out at your convenience and I do not need to be informed of when you go.
- 2) When you do the project, record on the timesheet as much information as you can such as: date, total hours worked (please break out drive time from on-site time and write down which is which – I will give credit for both), mileage (only one person per car should fill this out), also add where you cut, what equipment was used (chainsaw, handsaw, clippers) etc. If you have ideas on how to make the project go better, please include those also.

- 3) Please take before and after photos of the work done. These can be film or digital.
- 4) You may work more than eight hours and receive credit toward next year's requirements. Unfortunately, I cannot give Dedicated Hunter credit beyond the 24 hours needed during a three-year period, nor may I credit hours worked by another individual. You must work your own.
- 5) Send the original timesheets and other information back to: Utah Wildlife Resources, Attn: Ron Stewart, 152 East 100 North, Vernal Utah 84078. I need the original. Photos and information can be emailed (ronstewart@utah.gov); this also helps as a backup and a way for me to contact you if I have questions. I do need the volunteer agreement/time sheet to make it official so don't forget to mail those to me.
- 6) On some occasions, organized groups such as the Mule Deer Foundation and Boy Scout troops have lead trips to work on this project. Generally someone there is named as the "project leader" and is given extra time sheets and authority to sign.
- 7) After I receive the information, I will enter it in the database. It may take a couple of weeks before it gets entered depending mail services and other workload.

Note: credit will be given for the hours worked cutting down trees and drive time. Other time such as eating, fishing, camping cannot be considered for credit.



Juniper – scaled leaves



Pinyon Pine – needle shaped leaves

Finally, have some fun! Take along family and friends and make a day or weekend of the event. There is good fishing and camping nearby as well as good places to watch wildlife such as Starvation Reservoir and the Uinta Mountains.

Thank you for considering this project!!